



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

### **Policy and Program Committee**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

**October 4, 2012**

#### **Call to Order**

The Regular Meeting of the First Things First – Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Program Committee was held on Thursday, October 4, 2012 at the First Things First Board Room, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Members Present: Dr. Pam Powell, Bill Berk, Amy Corriveau, Julianne Hartzell, Toni Harvier, Eva Lester (Designee for Alan Taylor), Laurie Smith, Kim Van Pelt, Brad Willis

Members Absent: Gayle Burns, Dr. Randal Christensen, Colleen Day-Mach, Mary Ellen Cunningham, Naomi Karp, Kenton Laffoon, Dr. Eva Marie Shivers

FTF Staff: Karen Woodhouse, Dr. Amy Kemp, Sandy Foreman, Ann Kaskel, Mona Qafisheh, Dr. Karen Peifer, Kristin Richardson, Rhian Evans Allvin, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Chair Powell called the meeting to order at approximately 10:12 a.m.

#### **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chair Powell called for a review and possible approval of the meeting minutes from July 19, 2012. Member Smith noted that her name was not on the list of attendees but she was present. Member Hartzell moved to approve the meeting minutes with this correction, Member Smith seconded. Chair Powell motioned that it has been moved and approved and seconded that we accept these meeting minutes. No discussion, all in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

#### **Update on Policy and Program Advisory Committees and Sub-Committees**

No Advisory Sub-Committee Reports were shared at this meeting as the Sub-Committees have not met for a few months. The Committee reviewed the 2012-2013 meeting dates and agenda items listing.

#### **Update on State Level Benchmarks and Process to Determine Regional Benchmarks for School Readiness Indicators**

Chair Powell called on Karen Woodhouse to lead the presentation and discussion of approved state level benchmarks and review of the plan of action and timeline for Regional benchmark recommendations and approval.

Karen gave a brief recap of the progress made on the School Readiness Indicators and Benchmarks. The First Things First Board (Board) met on October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 and was presented with the recommendations for each Indicator and Benchmark except for Indicators number one and five. These two Indicators will not have enough data available to move forward on until a future date. The Board approved eight of the recommendations as presented.

Indicator #1: There is no current data available to move this forward. A data source will be confirmed in the future through a partnership between First Things First, the Arizona Department of Education, the State Board of Education, the Governor's Office and the Piper Trust Fund. This partnership is looking to develop an instrument which will measure school readiness of all Arizona children entering kindergarten. The tool is not expected to be available until sometime in 2014 and is tentatively being referred to as the kindergarten developmental inventory tool.

Indicators #2, #3 and #4 use Quality First data to establish the baselines. The Sub-Committee did recommend percentages they wanted to see above the baseline but this data is in its initial stages of being collected and will likely be available in July of 2013, when a substantial baseline can then be identified for these Indicators. The Sub-Committee did identify a percentage they wanted to see over the baseline when the baseline number is finalized.

Indicator #5: Have not yet identified the best data source to use for this benchmark. Through a partnership between St. Luke's Health Initiatives and First Things first, we are funding an opportunity assessment and have engaged Dr. Charlie Bruner out of the National Child and Family Policy Center based in Iowa. Dr. Bruner has met with his core group of planners and will conduct an opportunity analysis on all facets and components of the System we have in Arizona for intervening early for young children. This is not an assessment on the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) but about all of the partners which are engaged in early intervention including community based providers and state agencies. He'll be looking at Federal, State and local funding streams

and looking at the way data is collected, where and how the data is stored, used and accessed. Dr. Bruner will conduct a comprehensive assessment so we will have an understanding of the opportunities we have related to the pieces of the system and how we can move early intervention forward in Arizona. When the assessment is completed, First Things First will reconvene the Sub-Committees to look at the data not only for how we might use it for establishing a benchmark but also revisit how the language of this indicator is stated to be sure its intent of how many kids are being identified and receiving early intervention prior to kindergarten is met. Member Van Pelt who is partner in this effort shared that the initial planning committee recently met and another group of people that would be key informants is being identified to establish an Advisory Committee. Letters have been sent to the heads of State agencies informing them of the project and encouraging them to communicate if they have any concerns or questions about the project and asking them help ensure Dr. Bruner gets appropriate feedback throughout the process. Need to be very intentional that everyone is engaged in that loop and knows this is a system for everyone birth-five not just those enrolled in AZEIP.

Indicator #6: The Sub-Committee met and voted on the benchmark and changed the language to include the “number and **percentage** of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education”. For this Indicator data did show a significant difference from what was presented to the Program Committee in July. At that time the baseline and trend line were closer to the 14/15% level vs. where we see it now up in the 20% level. The trend line data reflects the direction is moving towards what was hoped to see. The Sub-Committee identified a benchmark of 30% of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education. This was increased from an original benchmark recommendation of 22.1% by 2020. This may not seem like a significant increase for the eight years but the Sub-Committee considered the fact that data may fluctuate during these years. Member Corriveau shared that between 2008-2011 there was a change in the categories of special education and the category of developmental delay was added so children are able to carry their identification and services in a more fluid continuum through kindergarten and don’t have to exit pre-school and be re-evaluated upon entering kindergarten. Member Willis identified that the first sub-bullet under Trend line data should be corrected from 2010-2011 to 2007/2008.

Indicators #7, #8 and #9: The First Things First Board approved these Indicators and Benchmarks with no changes.

Indicator #10: After the Program Committee meeting in July 2012, new data was received for this Indicator and now includes results from the Family and Community Survey. This is a weighted analysis and was first conducted in 2008 and again in the Spring of 2012 and will be repeated every two years for a total of four more reports by 2020. First Things First Staff reviewed the survey data and special thanks to the Research Evaluation unit for determining the Baseline figure of 63% of families being confident and competent about their ability to support their child’s safety, health and well-being. With this information the Sub-Committee has determined that we want to see a 10% movement for an increase to 73% benchmark by 2020.

Special note has been made in considering timelines when working with Tribes and using tribal data. Member Hartzell shared concern of Regional Councils not being able to move forward because of lack of data from the Tribes. CEO Allvin agrees that it can be a sensitive area and First Things First will have to navigate Council by Council and if there’s a sense that there will be a significant amount of work to get to a point where a Tribe is comfortable sharing data or may never feel comfortable sharing the data that there be some type of hybrid approach where we start forward on the benchmarks and approve them without the data and then integrate data as it’s received. Will have to come up with some creative ways to not slow the whole process down and at the same time honor the time it takes to build the relationships to get the data from the Tribes. Member Hartzell agrees that a hybrid will be needed. First Things First is working on hiring in the Evaluation Unit, an additional resource that can help in this area. Either a staff person or consultant who would focus specifically on tribal data issues. Not just related to benchmarks but all of the movement forward on using data and being a liaison and part of the relationship building with the Tribes and navigating the processes that we know exist.

Pam, in looking at work we’d like to see by 2020 we need to continue to realize a new cohort of babies is birthed and a new cohort of parents is formed each year and it seems we start over on the indicators and benchmarks every year as well. Member Berk agrees, when Regional Partnership Councils meet they have the same conversations. Just because a plan like professional development is discussed and a plan created, doesn’t mean Councils are done with professional development. But he believes it’s an issue for people who aren’t involved in the day to day operations of the system who don’t see the constant change happening.

### **Systems Approach Framework and Development of FY 2013 Work Plan**

Karen Woodhouse introduced the draft First Things First Strategic Direction Systems Approach tool. This tool is intended to help enter in conversations which are now shifting, from indicators and benchmarks which made up the framework in our strategic direction to how to move forward in a programmatic approach and how to enhance or shift direction. Significant work has been funded in the last year through three foundations, the Piper Trust, Helios Foundation and the Steele Foundation, which has brought the National BUILD Initiative to Arizona. BUILD is about ten years old and has been working nationally in about eight to nine states

and works with a core group of leaders to identify what pieces of the system need to move or change or build, who they want to influence and what the impact is they want to see. BUILD came and worked with all the partners in the early childhood system and engaged us in discussions on what they want to do. It's not duplicative of work we do at First Things First or that any state agency is doing, it's collaborative and meant to move forward in ways other agencies or partners can't. The Steering Committee consists of many people in the business community, because it's a group of people who have not traditionally been as engaged and also includes people who have been steadfast at the table and are represented. BUILD is not just zero-five, it is the entire early childhood spectrum of birth to age eight or grade three. First Things First considers itself the early part of the educational continuum and BUILD is using that plus, what we nationally think of as the early childhood sector which is birth to age eight or grade three. BUILD is engaged to do the work related to kids that aren't reading or who are far below reading proficiency. They also have Committees on 1) Communication, 2) Health, 3) Reading, 4) Quality Early Learning and the 5) Professional Development Workgroup which we've just transitioned from First Things First to be under the BUILD umbrella. Since this is something that affects all the system it was decided it was the better fit but First Things First will continue to lead, convene and staff the Professional Development Workgroup.

The tool was developed from the direction of the Early Childhood Task Force which produced three outcomes, identifying a collective vision for the early learning childhood system, identifying a model system for early childhood in Arizona and the third was to indicate to First Things First what the top priorities and roles in the system would be. The Task Force developed a great vision, model system and nine priorities that First Things First was to focus on during the next three to five years. There were actually 20 roles identified in all and any agency partnership at the table could look at those roles and identify their priorities but First Things First identified with nine to be focused on. The nine priorities is what First Things First focused on when we developed the ten school readiness indicators and these priorities and indicators were used to frame this strategic direction tool. This tool will serve as a frame on how we advance our strategic direction to change outcomes for kids. First Things First borrowed some of the work the BUILD Initiative had developed and used a publication created by Julia Kauffman to guide BUILD states on evaluating early childhood systems. This framework is being used by BUILD Arizona and Regional Partnership Councils as they think of their role in system building and will use with the Advisory Committees as they talk about the continuing system work they want to do. Not every Advisory Committee will use this exact framework, but will be similar. Ms. Kauffman's work started with **context** as defined by changing the political environment that surrounds the system and affects its success. It also includes **components** as establishing high performing and quality programs and services. **Connections** are creating strong and effective linkage across the system. **Infrastructure**, developing the supports the system needs to function effectively and with quality. And **scale**, ensuring the system is comprehensive and works for all children. Karen continued to walk through the document and asked for feedback from the Program Committee.

Program Committee Members shared that they felt it was a great start and is organized as a framework. That it is concise and visually gives a good example of what a "system" is. The format, which is more of a roadmap, will act as a guiding tool vs. partners in the system being told what to do. It may not be a tool the Regional Partnership Councils will use but will be helpful and may help Councils start thinking of policy change and how to move change forward. The tool was introduced to the Councils and First Things First has been working with them on the process. One request would be for an area to be identified on the tool of where obstacles/barriers could be identified.

#### **Next Steps and FY13 Meeting Dates**

Chair Powell announced the upcoming meetings of the Program Committee. Members were asked to hold these dates on their calendars:

- December 6, 2012, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Will focus on financial aspects of FTF, review the National Panel Evaluation Plan and discussion on Private/Public Partnerships.
- March 7, 2013, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.